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NON ALIGNED MOVEMENT COLLECTIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO NAM COLLECTIVE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2013

TAGS: PREL

SUBJECT: CUBA HOSTS FINAL NAM MINISTERIAL OF ITS PRESIDENCY

Classified By: COM Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) April 28-30, Cuba played host for a reported 60 minister-level participants in its last act in the NAM chair before Egypt takes over. As might be expected from this group in this venue, the ministerial was long on rhetoric--including lavish praise for the host government and criticism of the U.S. as the source of the world financial crisis--and short on any substantive proposals for action by the members. Perhaps the most important announcement was the acceptance by the representatives present of Iran as the venue for the 16th NAM Summit, which will be held in 2012. The final decision on the venue will be made at the next heads of state meeting to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from July 11-16, 2010.

¶2. (U) According to the Cuban press, the ministers produced an outcome document containing three major resolutions: one calling for solidarity among the third world countries in the face of the world financial crisis in preparation for the June meeting in the UN on the subject, the second expressing the solidarity of NAM members for Mexico as it confronts the H1N1 flu epidemic, and finally a resolution expressing solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe and calling for the lifting of sanctions against that nation.

¶3. (U) Cuban President Raul Castro addressed the plenum and made one noteworthy comment when he described recent policy changes announced by the President as "minimal" and said that Cuba had never done anything to harm the United States and therefore is not the one that has to make "gestures."

¶4. (C) COMMENT: USINT spoke with several locally-based diplomats who had attended the sessions and all agreed that nothing of importance had come out of the meeting. The general feeling was that the NAM continues to be rudderless since the collapse of the Soviet Union undercut its raison d'etre, and is now mostly an opportunity for like-minded governments to make long-winded propaganda statements. Raul seemed to be at pains to use his remarks to demonstrate that there is no space between him and brother Fidel on the issues of improving relations with the U.S. However, he also seemed to be walking back from his own earlier statements that improvement in relations with the US must be done on a basis of equality "matching gesture with gesture."

FARRAR